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Get your pup a collar and a bed BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

A black foster dog named Buddy from Lane County Animal Services was the spur that led to the creation of Illumidog's reflective collars. The jet-black spunky pit-mix was hard to see when his foster parents took him for strolls after work in the dark. Collar co-creator Danielle Werner had trouble finding just the right bright collar that would let Buddy shine in the dark, so she began to make her own.

Soon Buddy found his forever home and Werner had a small business called Illumidog. The collars, which cost \$19.95 and come in red, blue and purple, use extremely bright SOLAS prismatic reflective material, which Illumidog says is the same material used by the U.S. Coast Guard for reflective safety vests. A collar and leash set goes for \$28.95.

Werner is currently living in Michigan, but says she and Illumidog will return to Oregon in June. "Currently our collars are only available online, although we do plan on finding local retailers to carry our product once we return to Eugene," she says. You can find the collars and other doggie reflective products at www.illumidog.com

Once your pup has come in from the cold and is ready to curl up and be warm, St. Vincent De Paul has just the right bed for canine snuggling. Incredibly affordable at \$35 (you can practically buy a human mattress for the price some dog beds go for these days) and made locally out of recycled mattresses and material that would have wound up in a landfill, Dogma Pet Beds are what your pooch has been secretly dreaming of.

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Even better, Sharkey says if you want a particular color or pattern for your pet bed, St. Vinnies can do that too. Give Sharkey a call at 687-5820 or check the beds out on the webpage at www.svdnp.us/ **GG**



KAIYA MODELS HER ILLUMIDOG COLLAR (\$19.95) AND DOGMA PET BED (\$35).

Photograph by Amanda Smith

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Homegrown Holiday Albums

Halie Loren, Anna Gilbert release classic Yuletide albums BY RICK LEVIN

Currently Eugene is blessed with a two world-class female singer/songwriters, a pair of young but serious career musicians who – despite plying their talents in relatively different genres – bring that transcendent combination of soul, dedication and talent to their craft. When you hear either of their voices, it's difficult to believe that they live among us; they are just that good. And neither are they simply pretty faces and pretty voices: both of these accomplished musicians, veterans despite their years, write and arrange many of their own songs, another rarity in this day in age. These women are the real deal.

In the past couple of years, country/folk singer Anna Gilbert and jazz crooner/composer Halie Loren have found their careers on an upward trajectory: Loren, with several jazz albums including her latest, *After Dark*, recently signed with a Japanese label and has found her songs topping the charts in that country; she has just finished another CD, due out soon. If she hasn't arrived as a formidable jazz artist, she's damn close.

Winner of EW's 2010 *Next Big Thing* song contest for her hauntingly beautiful single "Room To Breathe," Gilbert is garnering similar attention for her engaging artistry. She's worked with some pretty big names in the Nashville scene, and her most recent albums have been exercises in catchy, whispering melodies and bittersweet vocals that are expertly restrained and yet powerfully evocative of the small seismic tremors of life lived, of love and loss.

There are those out there – humbugging Scrooges and present-pilfering Grinches – who seem to take masochistic pleasure in harrumphing the holidays, almost on principle. And yet, even with all the acknowledged stress and familial fallout brought on by this festive time of year, it's difficult to resist the sentimental pull of a well-conceived, nicely achieved Christmas album. Set aside the connotations of consumerism and crass commercialization, and many of our holiday classics are just darn good songs: the yearning promise of "I'll Be Home for Christmas," the cosmic peace of "Silent Night," the snowbound bonhomie of "Winter Wonderland" and, perhaps the finest of the lot,



"The Christmas Song," with its warm imagery and generosity of spirit.

For many of us, nothing sparks the holiday spirit and kick starts the season like a spin of our favorite Christmas album, whether it be by the Beach Boys, Mitch Miller, Aimee Mann, Bing Crosby or Zooey Deschanel. And, believe me, it is not rah-rah boosterism, keening charity or the patronizing pride of local product that leads me to point you in the direction of the holiday collections of Halie Loren and Anna Gilbert. These two women have made seasonal albums that can stand up with anything on the shelf, from *White Christmas* to *Sing Along with Mitch*. They are modern classics of the form, delivered by Gilbert and Loren with heart, humor and good vibrations, and polished by performances that will knock your stockings right off the mantle.

There's no reason to get fancy about it: Eugene native Anna Gilbert has the voice of an angel. It's gaspingly beautiful – girlish, vulnerable and sexy as Ronnie Spector, Gilbert is an accomplished but completely ingenuous and unadorned singer; not for her the jumpy vibrato, star-spangled trills or put-on drawls of many of her contemporaries. Gilbert's vocals – whether soft-spoken, thick with emotion or cut short by a rasp – are delivered with a natural immediacy that dials a direct line to your heart.

Simply titled **Anna Gilbert Christmas**, this 2010 holiday album is an exercise in minimalism

and simplicity; perhaps more than any of her albums, this one reveals the whole range of her vocal gifts. Recorded in her parents "bonus room" with one mic and a laptop, this collection of songs are as intimate, spontaneous and collaboratively integrated as an impromptu hootenanny.

Guitar, piano, bass, strings, banjo, mandolin and softly brushed percussion – the sound is at once profound and lighthearted, imbued with a kind of reverence that is anything but overbearing. Traditional spirituals like "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Away in a Manger" mix seamlessly with holiday staples like "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "I'll Be Home for Christmas," and the album ends with a rousing bluegrass rendition of "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

Jazz chanteuse and classic crooner Halie Loren is a Eugene treasure who, in just the past couple of years, has gone global; her singles regularly chart high in Japan, and she's been playing both nationally and overseas these days with dizzying regularity. Husky, honey-sweet, mellow, rich and smoothly capable of orbiting the emotional stratosphere of heartbreak and desire, Loren's voice is that most perfectly honed of instruments – a kind of natural barometer of the blues that is mature beyond its years. Her live performances are not to be missed. The girl has serious chops, and charm to spare.

In 2008, Loren – with her longtime collaborator, pianist Matt Treder – released **Many Times, Many Ways**, a jazz-infused cycle of popular and rare holiday numbers that are rendered with a torchy romanticism that just begs for hot toddies and cedar logs roaring in the fireplace. This is one sexy holiday album, which is not to say profane; let's just say that, were Dean Martin still around, Loren would be a shoe-in for a singing partner on "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Her version of "Santa Baby" is one of the highlights of the record.

Loren, who is also a talented composer and arranger, finds just the right languorous pace for such classics as "The Christmas Song," which she sings with a yearning lilt that turns the song into an invitation. The album also features a number of originals by Treder that fit perfectly among the general warmth of the season's sounds.

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Great holiday gifts for musicians of all skill levels BY ANDY VALENTINE

Musical gifts have a reputation for being expensive, once used and quickly discarded. This simply isn't true. Sure, you might not want to go out this winter and buy a baby grand before you're certain the recipient is 100 percent serious about becoming a lifelong pianist. But there are options that come at a much lower price, and they aren't hard to find.

A spirited hop, skip and jump down to 11th and Ferry will get you face to face with the Buy and Sell Center, or if you're a little further west, try McKenzie River Music on 11th and Washington. Musical knick-knacks are never in short supply, and they're greatly appreciated by all musicians, from veterans to musicians-to-be.

Try a **handmade Guatemalan guitar strap** on for size. The Buy and Sell Center is stocked up with these beauties; they're comfortable, adjustable and the stitch work on each is completely unique. Running you \$36, it's slightly pricier than your typical cheap-o strap, but distinction and quality are definitely something to be revered. Think of these as that crusty holiday sweater you love to wear and everyone loves to see you in.

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If you want to go balls to the wall and find a really basic beginning guitar, it's not going to be cheap. But if you've got a case of heart-set-on-guitar on your hands – and the magic of Christmas has you feeling generous – you can

typically pick one up for a little over \$100. At Buy and Sell they've got **Austin AA25Ds**, which are pretty sweet considering they typically cost \$125. They play nicely and are easy to learn on.

You'll probably want to keep that guitar safe, by the way: **Used hard cases** are normally super cheap, but you don't want your instrument landing in the snow (or puddles, as the case may be) because the hinges are coming apart. A reasonable quality protective case is \$40 at Buy and Sell, and it's worth the investment. Cold and damp is bad for instruments; warm and encased is good.

Happy Holidays and happy playing! **GG**

Buy and Sell Center is located at 410 East 11th Avenue, more info at buysellselleugene.com; McKenzie River Music is located at 455 West 11th Avenue, more info at mckenzievermusic.com

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**ARTIMALS
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NOELLE
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Artimals for All Seasons

Local painter **Noelle Dass** discovers the joy of doodling **BY RICK LEVIN**

In the beginning there were doodles – doodles, and a growing sense of frustration. An aspiring painter, Noelle Dass was attracted to the exacting tradition of classical realism. She started taking art classes at Lane Community College while holding down a full-time job at the Hult Center. What Dass wanted was to learn to wield her brush with an eye to the anatomical precision and intricate shadings of the Old Masters, but it was tough going.

"It's hard to find people that teach it very well," Dass said of her search for mentors in the classical mode. She struggled along nonetheless, making do with what instruction and inspiration she could scrounge up. "It was really fun, but I started to get frustrated because I didn't have any models," she says.

For as long as she can remember, Dass has been drawing stuff on scrap paper and in the margins of notebooks. She's filled sketchbooks with these drawings. "I'm a chronic doodler," she says. Born of artistic stalemate, she decided to make something of this seemingly absent-minded habit.

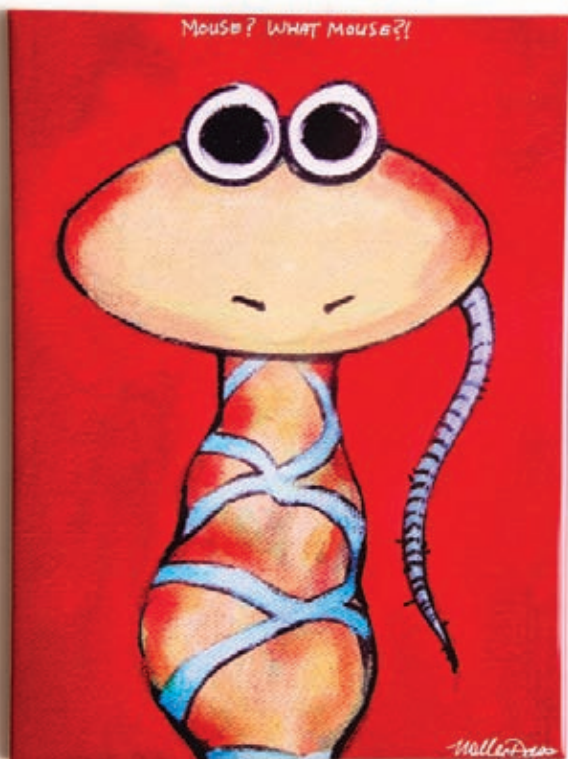
"I had these little doodles I had done," Dass says. "I thought, I'm just going to paint these. So I did. It was so fun. I could do any colors I wanted. There were no limitations."

This was in 2003. You can mark that year as the advent of a new make-believe species, which Dass dubbed artimals: brightly colored, sharply drawn characters whose linear simplicity belies a sly, singular sense of individuality. Dass's artimals – a snake, a shark, a giraffe – are almost impossibly cheery, which is not to say cheesy; like the drawings of Theodore Geisel or Matt Groening, a wry, generous sense of humor informs the simple geometry of this Eugene artist's fanciful creatures. Dass's artimals, like the sneetches of Suess, are immediately recognizable and uniquely hers.

"I think they have their own personalities," Dass says of the artimals. "I think I just sort of channel these personalities. I won't even know what I'm about to draw. I'll just try to clear my mind."

Many of the artimals feature their own aphorism, brief captions that capture some sort of essence. For instance, a cylindrical, bi-toned robot – just about the cutest robot you've ever seen – stands above the Orwellian phrase "I Will Not Be Assimilated," while a snake sporting a suspicious lump in its throat is saying, "Mouse? What Mouse?!" Dass says that oftentimes she won't know the defining trait of what she's drawing until it's finished. "The snake looked guilty," she says of her cute reptile. "They sort of reveal themselves to me, and they make me laugh."

Dass sold her first piece in 2004 at Eugene's annual Art and the Vineyard, and not long after that she took the leap and became a full-time artist. Her paintings and prints hang in a handful of galleries across the country, but her biggest venue by far is at Eugene's Holiday and Saturday markets, where she sells prints, tiles and T-shirts. "People here are really good about buying local," says Dass, who recently landed a \$10,000 commission for her artwork in a pediatric unit in Bend.



Dass says she really doesn't know why people respond so positively to her art. "I feel really lucky," she says. "A lot of my paintings make people laugh. People tell me the most wonderful things. I think, 'Wow, that's amazing to me.' It's a strange way of being connected to people but also very isolated."

Despite this occasional sense of isolation, Dass says she resists the stereotype of the suffering artist. She doesn't have any romantic addictions or bad habits, and says she likes being around people and having fun. Perhaps it is this sense of engagement that gives her work its inimitable sense of brightness and joy. "I just have fun doing the silly stuff," she says, noting that for one of her first art projects when she was 17 she simply drew a circle – a harbinger of things to come. "What's amazing is that my style was inside of me before I even knew it."

There have also been those folks who have told Dass, "I like your art against my better judgment," as though her artimals are somehow inferior because they lack the severity and integrity of, say, a Caravaggio. This doesn't bother her. "I think it would be extremely narcissistic to think that everyone would like my artwork," she says. "My art isn't for everyone, and I'm okay with that. I see so many smiles that I don't mind if people have their different opinions of what I do."

As an earning, full-time artist, Dass tries to give back as much as she can to the community that fostered and supports her. She donates many of her paintings to auction, and part of the proceeds from all sales support such organizations as FOOD for Lane County, Pasado's Safe Haven and Greenhill Human Society, to name just a few.

As for future projects, Dass says she's been considering writing a kid's book. "I'm always looking for something new to try," she says. "You just have to stick with it and be passionate and not give up." **GG**

Artwork by Noelle Dass, including prints, paintings, tiles and T-shirts (kids & adults) are available at the Holiday Market at the Lane County Fairgrounds, or online at noelledass.com

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THE 2012 END OF THE WORLD ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE SURVIVORS' STARTERKIT

BY DANTE ZUÑIGA-WEST

Let's face it, 2012 approaches. Nostradamus knew what was up. The Mayans saw it coming, too. It's anybody's guess as to what this next year will bring about. Maybe the arrival of the solar millennium? The earth's collision with a comet or vacuous black hole? A positive spiritual transformation of our planet and all its inhabitants?

Or perhaps it will be a blood-soaked, world-ravaging pandemonium of catastrophic proportions – filled with warfare, martial law, zombies and roving bands of degenerate thugs, heavily-armed and very pissed off – buildings burnt to ashes, freeways littered with abandoned sport utility vehicles, figures dancing in reflections of jagged glass as the definition of food changes. It could happen. Anything could happen.

Whatever the case, if you want to see 2013, you're well advised to be prepared. Should you not feel this way, you probably know someone who does. So for that special person, that ultimate survivalist boy (or girl) scout-lonewolf-hunter-killer-zombie-hating-one-world-government-fearing-hyper-vigilant loved one of yours, no gift could be more appropriate and appreciated than *EW's* official 2012 End of the World Zombie Apocalypse Survivors' Starter Kit. Trust us.

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Dick's Sporting Goods, \$2.49 for a 4-pack

Tomahawk

Chopping wood, chopping zombies-hey, you don't have to reload it and it works for midrange combat as well. *Edge N Knife, \$36.95*



Shovel

The foxholes of Khe Sanh were dug with shovels like this. The collapsible feature is perfect for the wandering nomadic survivor. *Dick's Sporting Goods, \$19.99-\$29.99*



Flashlight

Where will you be when the lights go out? Hopefully with one of these handy. Standard issue crookneck military flashlights are the way to go for the end-of-the-world scenario. Each comes with a series of different-colored lenses, for optimum use in a variety of environments. Pick up one of these and some extra batteries. *Action Surplus, \$12.95*



Rope

This one is a no-brainer. *True Value Hardware, varies in length and price.*



12-Gauge Pump Action Shotgun

No longer just for those who don't dial 9-1-1, the 12-gauge pump action shotgun is the premier food-harvesting, personal-protection, zombie-slaying device for the end times. Compact, versatile, capable of dispatching small and large game as well as the walking dead, a good 12-gauge is the MacGyver of the firearms world – it can do anything, anywhere. Plus, when the end comes, ammunition will be easy to find. While stores and businesses still exist, various models can be purchased and modified to the specifications of your hyper-vigilant loved one. *BiMart, \$300.00*



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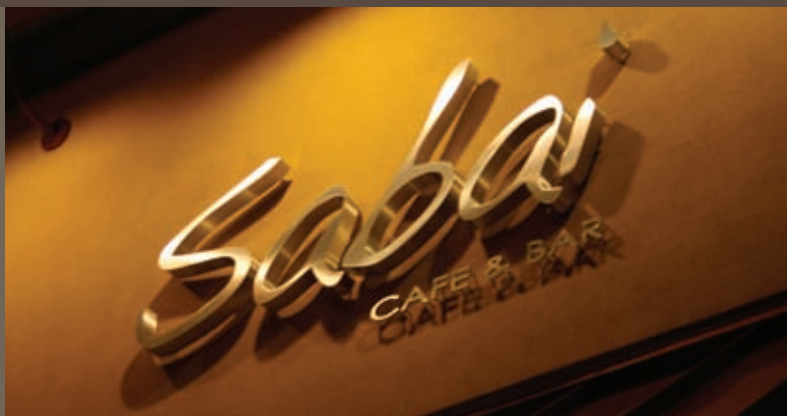
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Look, Ma, No Hands

BeerHoodie pouches your brew for you BY RICK LEVIN

It's one of those inventions that, upon first beholding its intuitive genius, you slap yourself on the forehead and exclaim: "Now why didn't I think of that?" Such is the cosmic common sense of the **BeerHoodie**, an essential piece of Northwest attire that seems to have been plucked from the heavens one of Plato's ideal forms. Marsupial in design, this pullover sweatshirt is equipped front and center with an insulated pouch that can hold just about any sort of beverage – preferably alcoholic – from the classic Pabst tall boy to an ice-cold bottle of Ninkasi's seasonal Sleigh'r Dark Double Alt Ale.

The BeerHoodie is the invention of Eugenean Hien Williams, who first dreamt up the concept on a vacation to the coast in 2008. "We worked on creating a design that was both fun and functional," Williams explains. "In addition to the insulated pocket for your favorite beverage, there is a slot in the pocket to run your headphones from your iPod."

Leaving both hands free for – what? It doesn't matter. Whether you're an outdoor enthusiast or a raging party animal, the BeerHoodie offers the last word in sartorial liberation. In fact, with the aid of a long straw, you could go all day without even removing your libation from its insulated resting place. If that doesn't say America, ain't nothing does.

Williams product was granted a patent in 2009, and according to him, "the response to this unique product has been terrific. People have been able to order it through our website and have it customized, so it has been sold to people across the country."

The BeerHoodie, which runs \$45 and comes in several sizes and colors, is available at The Graphics Shop, 1699 W. 11th Ave. or online at beerhoodie.com



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Aprons aren't just for June Cleaver and Mildred Pierce anymore. In fact, a new breed of kitchen cooking accoutrements, once a sign to academics and malcontents of sexist repression and involuntary housewifery, has become a symbol of badass baking and ownership of the kitchen. Take the full bib aprons that are part of **Anna's Haute Scrambled Aprons**, protective wear made from repurposed skirts and pants that is no less fashionable for being utterly utilitarian. Postmodern in design, these wonderful aprons present a sort of colorful conceptual collage that adds panache to the serious work of making meals. The bibs and pockets, created from fun and fanciful fabrics, complete the ensemble. Created by Anna Lawrence, these Haute Scrambled Aprons are made in a variety of designs and are available at Eugene's Holiday Market for a mere \$45; for more information or to peruse aprons online, visit annashauteaprons.com



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Liquid Christmas, in style

Glasswork gifts by Obsidian Manufacturing BY ANDY VALENTINE

Local glass blower Brent Turner sticks to architectural glasswork for most of the year. Come winter, though, the holiday season demands his custom fabrications, and he's more than happy to oblige. The dude is a master craftsman; using a custom order system, he's able to make you pretty much anything you want in an array of different colors: Be it pint glasses, wine glasses, shot glasses or Christmas ornaments.

"In a lot of ways it's much easier to do a custom job than, you know, a production line," says Turner. "With a production based product line you've got six months where any item you make is unique. If you sell locally, you've got six months before someone figures out how to make it, and then your stuff's gonna get bootlegged."

It's refreshing to find a glassworker in Lane County that doesn't spend all of his talent on paraphernalia, and it's not like Turner doesn't have the skills to make some awesome pipes – he just chooses a classier route.

Take, for example, his beautiful **hanging ornaments**. With all their curlicues and drippy stem work, it's tough to imagine them looking anything but excellent on a tree. Prices range between \$8-\$25 for a variety of shapes and sizes, colors and weights. The \$16 black-and-white ornament (pictured), for example, weighs more than your average shtick-y icicle ornament, and might even be better suited as a porch ornament.

"The glass we use is designed for scientific application," Turner says. "It's stable up to 550 degrees and

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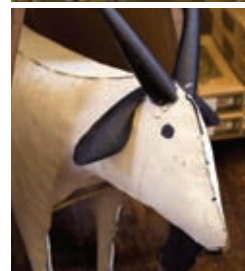
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has a solid, steady range so that it won't thermal shock. I started making my own pint glasses when they kept breaking between the dishwasher and the icebox, and this is a whole lot sturdier."

If you're looking for something to pour your winter ales and hearty stouts into this year, look no further: Turner's **pint glasses** are awesome – that's all there is to it. They're shaped in a pretty standard way but are adorned with little details that make them distinct. Pint glasses range from \$25-\$40 and, as explained, are far more difficult to break with severe temperature changes than your average piece. That's right: you can go from the fireside straight out into the snow and your glass won't shatter. Just don't drop it and you'll be fine.

Of course some people like to curl up with a glass of wine, brandy or sherry during the holidays, and Turner's **stemware** is more than suitable for such occasions. His wine glasses are weighted beautifully, and they're thin enough to have an attractively clinky, crystal tone without being overly breakable. With prices ranging from \$20-\$80, this isn't the type of stemware you just throw into any old cupboard; so toast carefully, drink responsibly and enjoy the beautiful patterns that Turner bedecks his work with.

"Every now and again we'll get somebody out there who wants a real goulash of stuff," Turner says. "That's what makes it fun." **GG**

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